

CAPSULE SUMMARY**BA-1057****421 E. Pennsylvania Avenue****East Towson, Baltimore County****1890-1905****Private**

The dwelling at 421 E. Pennsylvania Avenue was constructed between 1890 and 1905 in the East Towson neighborhood of Baltimore County. The history of East Towson dates from the purchase of one-and-a-quarter acres of land by Daniel Harris in September 1853. This is believed to be the first documented African-American landholding in Towson, and is among the oldest such ethnic enclave in Baltimore County. Further, manumitted slaves and/or descendents of former slaves, many of who were owned by Charles Ridgely, populated the neighborhood. Hampered by the low economic status of the residents, development in the 19th century was slow, increasing after the turn of the 20th century. The setting of the property, building styles, and construction materials were guided by the limited economic status of the residents and their desire to establish a neighborhood of their own without the assistance of white architects, builders, and craftsmen. By 1927, the community was ninety-five percent improved with single-family dwellings, social buildings, a school, and religious structures.

This vernacular dwelling is a wood frame house clad with German vinyl siding and sits on a solid poured concrete foundation. It has a side gable roof sheathed with asphalt shingles, and is three bays wide with an off center entrance. The single-leaf wood paneled door has a 6-light storm door. A shed roof porch covers the full-width of the façade. It is supported with square wood posts and a continuous wood frame balustrade which is covered with German vinyl siding. The original windows are 6/6 double-hung wood sashes, and the cornice is boxed. There is a two-story parged concrete addition located on the rear elevation. The addition has a exterior side concrete block chimney flue.

Inventory No. BA- 1057

1. Name of Property

(indicate preferred name)

historic

other

2. Location

street and number 421 E. Pennsylvania Avenue _____ not for publication

city, town	Baltimore	vicinity

county Baltimore County

3. Owner of Property

(give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Elizabeth Smith, Arthur A. Brown

street and number	421 E. Pennsylvania Avenue	telephone	Not Available
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city, town	Baltimore	state	MD	zip code	21286-5409
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4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc.	Baltimore County Courthouse	liber	unknown folio	unknown
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city, town	Towson	tax map	70	tax parcel	112	tax ID number	919513400
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5. Primary Location of Additional Data

- ☐ Contributing Resource in National Register District
☐ Contributing Resource in Local Historic District
☐ *Determined Eligible for the National Register/Maryland Register*
☐ Determined Ineligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
☐ Recorded by HABS/HAER
☐ Historic Structure Report or Research Report at MHT
☐ Other:

6. Classification

Category	Ownership	Current Function		Resource Count	
_____ district	_____ public	_____ agriculture	_____ landscape	Contributing	Noncontributing
<u> X </u> building(s)	<u> X </u> private	_____ commerce/trade	_____ recreation/culture	<u> 1 </u>	_____ buildings
_____ structure	_____ both	_____ defense	_____ religion	_____	_____ sites
_____ site		<u> X </u> domestic	_____ social	_____	_____ structures
_____ object		_____ education	_____ transportation	_____	_____ objects
		_____ funerary	_____ work in progress	<u> 1 </u>	_____ Total
		_____ government	_____ unknown		
		_____ health care	_____ vacant/not in use		
		_____ industry	_____ other:		
				Number of Contributing Resources previously listed in the Inventory	
				<u> 1 </u>	

7. Description

Inventory No. BA- 1057

Condition

<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> altered

Prepare both a one paragraph summary and a comprehensive description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

This vernacular dwelling is located at 421 E. Pennsylvania Avenue in the neighborhood of East Towson in Baltimore County. It is a wood frame house clad with German vinyl siding and sits on a solid poured concrete foundation. It has a side gable roof sheathed with asphalt shingles, and is three bays wide with an off center entrance. The single-leaf wood paneled door has a 6-light storm door. A shed roof porch covers the full-width of the façade. It is supported with square wood posts and a continuous wood frame balustrade which is covered with German vinyl siding. The original windows are 6/6 double-hung wood sashes, and the cornice is boxed. There is a two-story parged concrete addition located on the rear elevation. The addition has a exterior side concrete block chimney flue.

8. Significance

Inventory No. BA- 1057

Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> health/medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> performing arts	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1999	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment/ recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion	
<input type="checkbox"/> 2000-	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> ethnic heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science	
	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/ settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> social history	
	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning		<input type="checkbox"/> maritime history	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	
	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation		<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:	

Specific dates 1890-1905

Architect/Builder Unknown

Construction dates 1890-1905

Evaluation for:

☐ National Register

☐ Maryland Register

☒ not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance projects, complete evaluation on a DOE Form – see manual.)

The house at 421 E. Pennsylvania Avenue was constructed between 1890 and 1905 in the East Towson neighborhood of Baltimore County. East Towson is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history, specifically the pre-Civil War development of an African-American neighborhood in a predominately white community. The history of this property dates from the purchase of one-and-a-quarter acres of land by Daniel Harris in September 1853. This is believed to be the first documented African-American landholding in Towson, and is among the oldest such ethnic enclave in Baltimore County. Further, manumitted slaves and/or descendents of former slaves, many of who were owned by Charles Ridgely, populated the neighborhood. Hampered by the low economic status of the residents, development in the 19th century was slow, increasing after the turn of the 20th century. The setting of the property, building styles, and construction materials were guided by the limited economic status of the residents and their desire to establish a neighborhood of their own without the assistance of white architects, builders, and craftsmen. By 1927, the community was ninety-five percent improved with single-family dwellings, social buildings, a school, and religious structures. Many of the current homeowners and tenants living in the neighborhood are descendents of the first African-American residents.

East Towson as a whole is representative of an important phase of architectural development in Baltimore County, illustrating the dilution of popular architectural styles to more efficiently meet the needs of the neighborhood, and the builders' untrained abilities to execute the fashionable ornamentation. Thus, East Towson provided lower cost housing in a more suburban neighborhood, rather than the urban setting their economic status typically perpetuated.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Inventory No. BA- 1057

- Atlas of Baltimore County, Maryland.* Philadelphia, PA: G. M. Hopkins, 1877.
Baltimore County Historic Inventory.
Brooks, Neal A. and Eric G. Rockel. *A History of Baltimore County.* Towson, MD: Friends of the Towson Library, Inc., 1979.
Map of Baltimore County. Philadelphia, PA: G. W. Bromley, 1915.
Scharf, J. Thomas. *History of Baltimore City and County From the Earliest Period to the Present Day: Including Biographical Sketches of Their Representative Men.* Philadelphia, PA: Louis H. Everts, 1881. Reprinted by Higginson Book Company, Salem, MA.
Sidney, J. C. *Map of the City and County of Baltimore, Maryland, from Original Surveys.* Baltimore, MD: James M. Stephens, 1850.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property .27 Acre
Acreage of historical setting Unknown
Quadrangle name Towson Quadrangle scale: 1:24,000

Verbal boundary description and justification

The dwelling is located at 421 East Pennsylvania Avenue in East Towson in the Ninth District of Baltimore County. It has historically been associated with Tax Map 70, Parcel 112 since its construction between 1890-1905

11. Form Prepared by

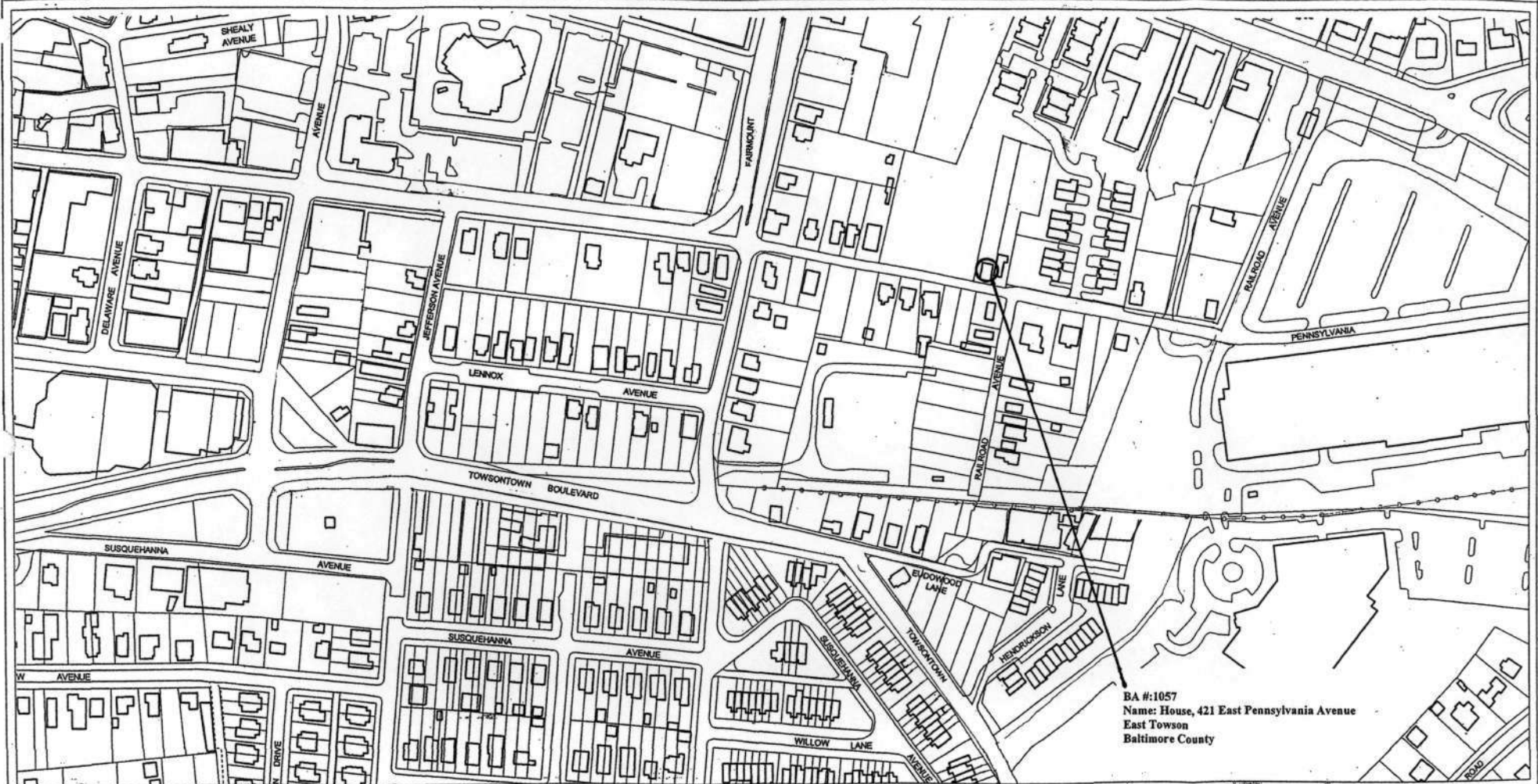
name/title	K. Baynard, R. Weidlich, J. Bunting, Architectural Historians		
organization	EHT Tracerics, Incorporated	date	November 30, 2001
street & number	1121 5th Street NW	telephone	202.393.1199
city or town	Washington	state	DC

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust
DHCD/DHCP
100 Community Place
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023
410-514-7600

East Towson: Planimetric Data



Prepared by:
Baltimore County Office of Planning
401 Bosley Avenue
Towson, Maryland 21204
June, 2001



Scale
1 inch = 200 feet
1:2400
100 0 100 200 Feet

Legend

Paved Roads	Hydrographic Features
Unpaved Roads	Buildings
Paved Parking / Driveways	Vegetation
Study Area Boundary	

Data Sources:
Planimetric Data: Baltimore County OIT GIS Services Unit (1:2400)
Parcel Boundaries: Baltimore County OIT GIS Services Unit (1:2400)
Study Area: Baltimore County Office of Planning (1:2400)
Coordinate System:
- Maryland State Plane: NAD83/91 Horizontal Datum
Elevations in Feet: NAVD88 Vertical Datum
Date of Data Capture: March 1998
Scale of Data Capture: 1" = 100'



**East Towson
Towson, Maryland
Towson USGS Quad Map
Baltimore County**

BA-1057

(BALTIMORE WEST)
5662 5W

Mapped by the Army Map Service
Edited and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS, USC&GS, USCE, and Maryland
Bureau of Control Surveys and Maps

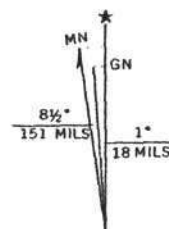
Culture and drainage in part compiled from aerial photographs
taken 1943. Topography by planetable surveys 1944
Culture revised by the Geological Survey 1957

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Maryland coordinate system
1000-metre Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
zone 18, shown in blue

Red tint indicates areas in which only
landmark buildings are shown

Revisions shown in purple compiled by the Geological Survey from
aerial photographs taken 1966 and 1974. This information not
field checked

Purple tint indicates extension of urban areas



UTM GRID AND 1974 MAGNETIC NORTH
DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET



BA-1057
HOUSE, 421 EAST PENNSYLVANIA AVE.
BALTIMORE COUNTY, MD

TRACERIES

10/2001

MD-SHPD

SOUTH ELEVATION

1 of 3



BA-1057
HOUSE, 421 EAST PENNSYLVANIA AVE.
BALTIMORE COUNTY, MD
TRAILERIES
10/2001
MD-SHPD
EAST ELEVATION



BA-1057

HOUSE, 421 EAST PENNSYLVANIA AVE
BALTIMORE COUNTY, MD
TRAILERIES

10/2001

MD-SHPD

WEST ELEVATION

3 of 3

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

BA-1007 1057

MAG# 100310575704

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC

THE DREAM HOUSE

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER 421 Pennsylvania Ave.

second

CITY, TOWN

Towson Md.

VICINITY OF Balto.

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

COUNTY

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Elizabeth & Arthur Smith

Telephone #:

STREET & NUMBER

421 Pennsylvania Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Towson Maryland

VICINITY OF Baltimore Co.

STATE, zip code

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

Liber #:

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Baltimore County Courthouse

Folio #:

STREET & NUMBER

401 Bosley Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Towson Md. 21204

STATE

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

BA-1057 - 421 Pennsylvania

before 1915

This two-story frame house is three bays wide by one bay deep, and has a stuccoed two-story shed addition along the rear. A porch enhances the street facade.

7 DESCRIPTION**CONDITION**

☐ EXCELLENT ☐ DETERIORATED
☐ GOOD ☐ RUINS
☐ FAIR ☐ UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

☐ UNALTERED
☐ ALTERED

CHECK ONE

☐ ORIGINAL SITE
☐ MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

421 Pennsylvania Avenue

A low stone wall topped by a picket fence creates an attractive setting for this two-story frame house. The house was built before 1915. It is three bays wide by one bay deep. A 6/6 window occupies each bay on each floor except for the central south bay, which accommodates the door and is unlit on the second floor. The gable roof of this house runs east-west. A semi-enclosed, shed-roofed porch crosses the south, or street facade. Large square posts support the roof. The house is covered with grey asphalt shingles and rests on a stone foundation. A two-story shed-roofed addition of stucco over concrete block covers the north side of the house.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

8 SIGNIFICANCE

BA-1057

PERIOD

☐ PREHISTORIC
☐ 1400-1499
☐ 1500-1599
☐ 1600-1699
☐ 1700-1799
☐ 1800-1899
☐ 1900-

☐ ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC
☐ ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC
☐ AGRICULTURE
☐ ARCHITECTURE
☐ ART
☐ COMMERCE
☐ COMMUNICATIONS

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

☐ COMMUNITY PLANNING
☐ CONSERVATION
☐ ECONOMICS
☐ EDUCATION
☐ ENGINEERING
☐ EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT
☐ INDUSTRY
☐ INVENTION

☐ LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
☐ LAW
☐ LITERATURE
☐ MILITARY
☐ MUSIC
☐ PHILOSOPHY
☐ POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

☐ RELIGION
☐ SCIENCE
☐ SCULPTURE
☐ SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
☐ THEATER
☐ TRANSPORTATION
☐ OTHER (SPECIFY)

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This house represents the struggle of working class people to obtain, some semblance of the american dream.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE

COUNTY

STATE

COUNTY

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Marcus E. Pollock/coordinator Merry Stinson/architect 7/77

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Towson Ymca/Committee to Save E. Towson

823-8870

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

600 W. Chesapeake Avenue

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Towson Md. 21204

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

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RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 267-1438



BA-1057

Arthur Smith House

421 Pa. Ave.

Towson, Md.

South
Merry Stinson

1977



BA-1057
Arthur Smith House
421 Pa.
Towson, Md.
west

Merry Stinson
1977